

Burarra language

The **Burarra** language is an Australian Aboriginal language spoken by the Burarra people of Arnhem Land. It has several dialects.

Other names and spellings include Barera, Bawera, Burada, Bureda, Burera, An-barra (Anbarra), Gidjingaliya, Gu-jingarliya, Gu-jarlabiya, Gun-Guragone (also used for Guragone), Jikai, Tchikai.

The Djangu people have a Burarra clan, which is sometimes confused with this language.^[4]

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Classification

Burarra is a prefixing non-Pama-Nyungan language. Along with Gurr-goni, it makes up the Burarran branch of the Maningrida language family (which also includes Ndjébbana and Nakara).^{[5][6][7]}

Distribution

The Burarra people are from the Blyth and Cadell River regions of Central and North-central Arnhem Land, but many now reside further west in Maningrida township at the mouth of the Liverpool River.^{[5][8]}

Dialects

Burarra	
Region	Northern Territory
Ethnicity	Burarra, Gadjalivia
Native speakers	995 (2016 census) ^[1]
Language family	Arnhem? <div> <div>▪ Maningrida</div> <div>▪ Burarra</div> </div>
Dialects	Gun-narta (Gidjingaliya, Anbarra) <p>Gun-nartpa (Gudjarlabiya)</p> <p>Gun-narda (Martay)</p>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	bvr
Glottolog	bura1267 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/bura1267) ^[2]
AIATSIS ^[3]	N82 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/N82)

Glasgow (1994) distinguishes three dialects of Burarra: Gun-nartpa (Mu-golarra/Mukarli group from the Cadell River region), Gun-narta (An-barra, western side of the mouth of the Blythe River), and Gun-narda (Martay, eastern side of the Blythe River). These dialect names derive from each dialect's word for the demonstrative 'that'. She further notes that the two latter dialects (Gun-narta and Gun-narda) are frequently grouped together and referred to by their eastern neighbours as 'Burarra', and by themselves as 'Gu-jingarliya' ('language'/'with tongue').

Green (1987) distinguishes two dialects: Gun-nartpa and Burarra (Gu-jingarliya), but notes that noticeable dialectal differences exist within the group of Burarra speakers.

Phonology

Consonants

Consonant chart^[9]

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
Plosive fortis	p	t	ɖ	c	k
Plosive lenis	b	d	ɖ̥	ɟ	g
Nasal	m	n	ɳ	ɲ	ŋ
Lateral		l	ɭ		
Rhotic		r	ɽ/ɻ		
Glide	w			j	

In most cases, fortis and lenis refers to the voicing in consonants where *fortis* is voiceless and *lenis* is voiced.^[10] In this case, plosives are distinguished by intra-oral peak pressure and stricture duration. Fortis consonants are usually longer in duration and have a greater intra-oral pressure while lenis consonants can often be pronounced as fricatives or approximants. The Burarra language also allows for the clustering of consonants.^[9]

Vowels

Burara has a five vowel system.

Vowel Chart^[9]

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Open-Mid	ɛ (e)		o
Open		e (a)	

The vowels can be realized as:

/i/: close-mid front vowel, [e], or [ɪ]

/a/: low central vowel or schwa

/ɛ/: [ɛ] or [e]

/o/: [o] or [ɔ]

/u/: schwa, a lowered open-mid back rounded vowel, a lowered [ö], or [ʊ]^[9]

Grammar

Burarra is a prefixing, multiple-classifying language. Verbs co-reference their subjects and objects through the use of prefixes, and inflect for tense and status. Serial verbs can be used to express categories like aspect, compound action and causation.^[5]

Nouns inflect for case and belong to one of four noun classes (*an-*, *jin-*, *mun-* and *gun-*).^{[5][8]}

Further reading

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References

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2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Burarra" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bura1267>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

3. N82 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/N82>) Burarra at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
4. N135 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/N135>) Burarra (Djangu) at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
5. Green, Rebecca (1987). *A sketch grammar of Burarra*. Canberra: Honours thesis, Australian National University.
6. Elwell, Vanessa (1977). *Multilingualism and lingua francas among Australian Aborigines: A case study of Maningrida*. Canberra: Honours Thesis, Australian National University.
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8. Glasgow, Kathleen (1994). *Burarra–Gun-nartpa dictionary with English finder list*. Darwin: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
9. Graetzer, Naomi (2005). "An Acoustic Study of Coarticulation: Consonant-Vowel and Vowel-to-Vowel Coarticulation in Four Australian Languages". *MA Thesis*. University of Melbourne: 37–39.
10. "Fortis and lenis" (<https://notendur.hi.is/peturk/KENNSLA/02/TOP/fortlen.html>). *notendur.hi.is*. Retrieved 22 December 2018.

External links

- ELAR archive of Gun-nartpa (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0276>)
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